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24 June 1993

Original: CHINESE AND
ENGLISH

WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Vienna, 14-25 June 1993
Agenda items 9, 10, 11 and 12

GENERAL DEBATE ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF OBSTACLES TO FURTHER PROGRESS IN THIS AREA AND WAYS IN WHICH THEY CAN BE OVERCOME

CONSIDERATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT, DEMOCRACY AND THE UNIVERSAL ENJOYMENT OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, KEEPING IN VIEW THE INTERRELATIONSHIP AND INDIVISIBILITY OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

CONSIDERATION OF CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN AND NEW CHALLENGES TO THE FULL REALIZATION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND MEN, INCLUDING THOSE OF PERSONS BELONGING TO VULNERABLE GROUPS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: (a) STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS; (b) ENSURING THE UNIVERSALITY, OBJECTIVITY AND NON-SELECTIVITY OF THE CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES; (c) ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES AND MECHANISMS; (d) SECURING THE NECESSARY FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Letter dated 24 June 1993 from the Deputy Chairman of the Delegation of China, addressed to the President of the World Conference on Human Rights

The Chinese delegation has noted a letter by the Austrian delegation to the World Conference on Human Rights, which you have, at the request of the said delegation, circulated as a document of the Conference (A/CONF.157/11) on 22 June 1993. The letter mentions that the Austrian Government had invited the Dalai Lama to come to Vienna on the occasion of the opening of the World Conference on Human Rights. In this connection, the Chinese delegation would wish to make the following statement.

The World Conference on Human Rights is the second one of this scope on human rights since the establishment of the United Nations. People have placed great hopes on it, expecting that the Conference could further promote the activities in the field of human rights. The objective of the Conference is to strengthen international cooperation for the achievement of all human rights. The Dalai Lama is not only a religious figure, but also a political exile who has been engaged in attempts to split China for years. What he has been doing is aimed at the dismembering of a Member State of the United Nations. What he is trying to restore is the long discarded serfdom practised in Tibet in the past. His activities run counter to the purposes of the World Conference. The Austrian Government should not have invited the Dalai Lama to participate in any official activities. It should not, particularly, in violation of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and in disregard of the opposition and admonition of China and the United Nations, have allowed him to participate in activities relating to the World Conference on Human Rights.

As the World Conference is approaching its end, the Austrian side has once again raised the issue of the Dalai Lama. The Chinese delegation cannot but express its strong discontent at this action.

The Chinese delegation requests that this letter be circulated as an official document of the World Conference on Human Rights, under agenda items 9, 10, 11 and 12.

(Signed) Jin Yongjian
Deputy Chairman
Delegation of China

UNITED
NATIONS

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WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
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Agenda items 9, 10, and 11

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CONSIDERATION OF CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN AND NEW CHALLENGES TO THE FULL REALIZATION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND MEN, INCLUDING THOSE OF PERSONS BELONGING TO VULNERABLE GROUPS

Letter dated 21 June 1993 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Secretary-General of the World Conference on Human Rights

Herewith is a copy of a letter I have today handed to the editor of "Terra Viva" in response to an article which appeared in their edition of Saturday, 19 June 1993.

It would be appreciated if you would circulate this letter and its annex* as a document of the Conference.

(Signed:) Riaan Eksteen
Ambassador

* Annex circulated in English only as A/CONF.157/21/Add.1.

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ENGLISH ONLY

WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Vienna, 14-25 June 1993
Agenda items 9, 10, and 11

GENERAL DEBATE ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF OBSTACLES TO FURTHER PROGRESS IN THIS AREA AND WAYS IN WHICH THEY CAN BE OVERCOME

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Addendum

VIE.93-535

Annex

Dear Sir,

I refer to the article concerning South Africa in "Terra Viva" of Saturday, 19 June.

Your readers deserve an accurate description of South Africa's position within the United Nations system.

It is indeed a matter of common knowledge, as reported by your correspondent, that the seats behind the "Afrique du Sud" nameplate have been deliberately left unoccupied since the beginning of the Conference. This is, however, of course not in any way to be seen or construed as disrespect to the United Nations or the Host Country. In fact, both have been carefully kept informed of South Africa's intention of not occupying its allocated seats. The word "Boycot", as used by your reporter, thus conveys a totally wrong impression, especially as this situation is certainly not due to circumstances of South Africa's own choosing.

As you may know, the Delegation of the Government of South Africa was expelled from the General Assembly in 1974 when its credentials were rejected. This has never been accepted by South Africa, as the Charter contains detailed and quite different procedures for expelling a member state which has transgressed the Charter. At the time, those in favour of the expulsion from the General Assembly made much of the argument that every assembly is master of its own proceedings. On this basis, at least, any predictions of how the World Conference might have decided on this issue must rest essentially on speculation.

South Africa remains a full member of the United Nations. Its flag flies prominently outside the building. The taking up of our seats in the Plenary is not something we wish or need to rush. Bearing in mind the constitutional developments in South Africa our full participation in all United Nations assemblies is now inevitable, in the shorter rather than the longer term. After having waited since 1974 to take up our seats in the General Assembly or General Assembly sponsored conference, South Africa has no intention of creating embarrassment, difficulties or even unease for anyone when readmission will happen as a matter of course within months.

Under these circumstances, to suggest, as does your article and headline, that President de Klerk of South Africa is arriving in Vienna "tomorrow" (which would have been on 20 June) to seek to benefit from the reflected publicity of the World Conference is downright untrue. By now you must know that President de Klerk did not arrive on Sunday and will only be arriving on 26 June. This was in fact explicitly explained to your correspondent by our Mr Mulder whom you quote in your article. It is thus difficult to comprehend what purpose the author of your report could have in persisting with this untruth, unless he wanted to create sensation out of a visit which has no such purpose.

Any suggestion that South Africa might attempt to gain any cheap publicity from the World Conference is rejected with contempt. However, after exhaustive consultations with many states in all regional groups, the South African Government decided not to formally take up its seats at the Conference. Among other considerations, South Africa did not wish to be a cause of division, particularly within the African group of which it inevitably will become a member shortly. Not least of all was South Africa's desire not to add even the possibility of yet a further subject of contention to the already heavily laden agenda of the World Conference.

The thus carefully considered decision by South Africa can for no single moment be seen as demonstrating any lack of interest in human rights, in general, or, in this Conference, in particular. Quite the contrary. Senior officials monitored all the sessions of the Geneva Prepcoms, as well as the informal intergovernmental consultations. Enquiries were made about participation in the African Regional Conference (not, incidentally, attended by the ANC or PAC) but it was decided not to do so when it became clear that that might embarrass the host institutions. An official from Geneva attended the Meeting of Senior Officials in Vienna before the Conference commenced. The current Conference is being followed by four senior diplomats, of which two are of Ambassadorial rank. We consult on a daily basis with the delegations from all regions and with the Secretariat. All our interlocutors know and appreciate our intentions and interests.

Shortly, a Transitional Executive Council will be established in South Africa. Consequently, the present authorities see it as their duty to remain abreast of the latest developments in this vital field to the benefit of all future governments and generations in our country.

In conclusion, let me repeat that the South African Government sincerely wishes the World Conference well, and will, for whatever role it can play, continue to be helpful in ensuring a fruitful and successful outcome for this important global gathering.